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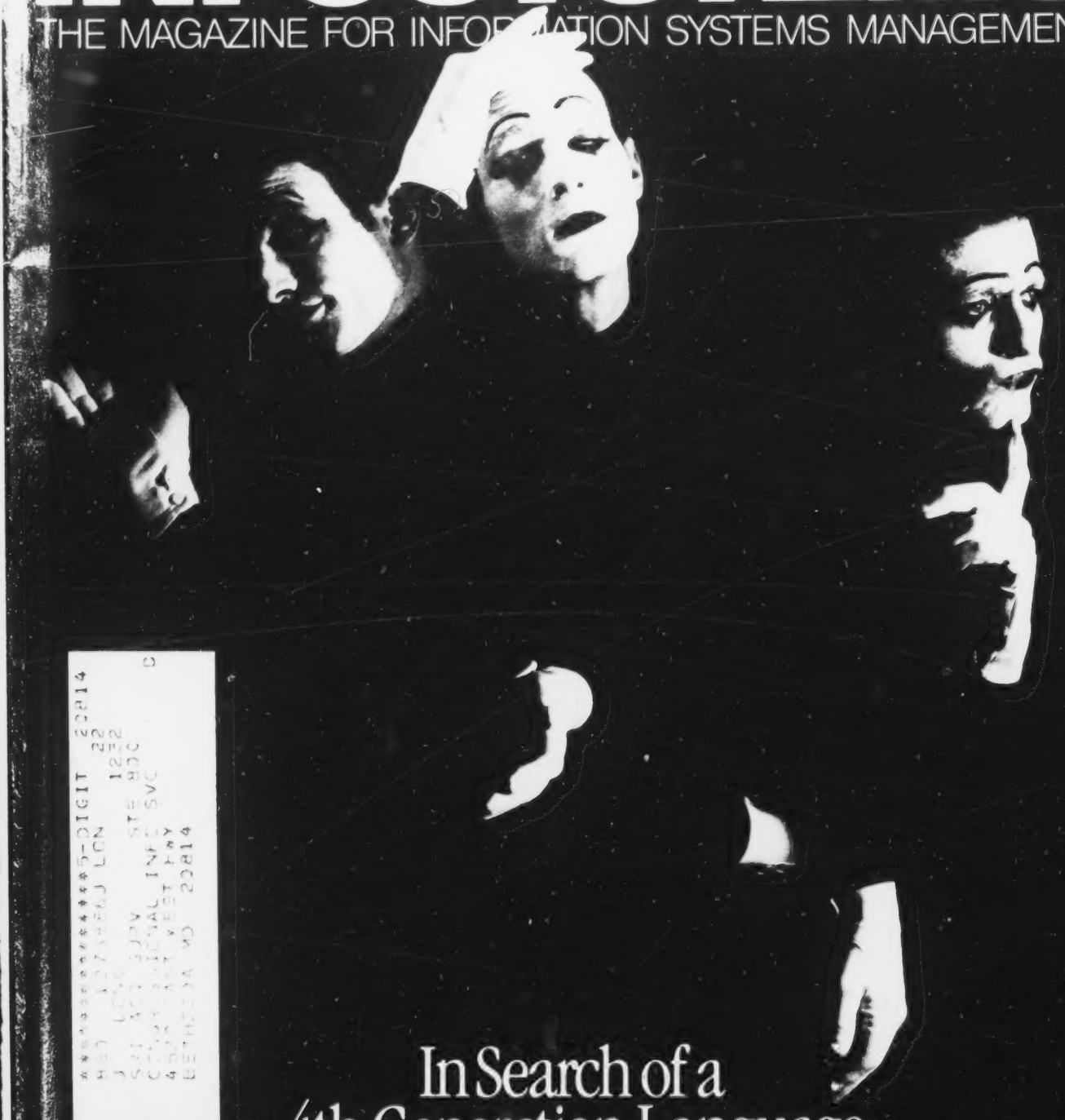

In Search of a 4th Generation Language

Gaining Competitive Advantage ♦ *Spreadsheets on a Mainframe*

Microcomputer Compatibility ♦ *How to Buy Graphics Software Tools*

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Failure to provide proper work environment real source of ills

Management's failure to provide a proper working environment for its data entry staff is the real source of many health problems associated with the growing use of visual display terminals (VDTs). This is the finding of a survey conducted by the Data Entry Management Assn. (DEMA), which represents over 40,000 data entry managers, supervisors and operators.

Data entry operators, whose primary responsibility is keying information into a computer, probably spend more time in front of a computer terminal than any other segment of the work force. Clerical workers, who prepare, code and arrange documents for keying, were also polled to determine any differences between the symptoms described by computer operators and nonusers.

The survey asked the question, "Which of the following symptoms are you experiencing now?" DEMA polled 351 data entry operators and 140 clerical workers from 26 different data processing centers in the US and Canada. The centers represented both key-to-disk (73.1 percent) and on-line (26.9 percent) facilities.

Problems reported ranged from eyestrain and headaches to backaches and fatigue.

Complaints	Operator (%)
Eyestrain	68.7
Backpain	67
Fatigue	62.1
Neck/shoulder pain	61.8
Burning, irritated eyes	44.4
General irritability	39.9
Blurred vision	36.5
Arm/leg pain	35.3
Nervousness	27.6
Stomach pain	11.7
Swollen muscles/joints	11.4
Skin rash	6.8

Source: Data Entry Management Assn. (DEMA)

Norman Bodek, president of DEMA, pointed out that it is not the machines themselves that cause discomfort. The similarity in symptoms between operators and clerks seems to indicate that it is the nature of the work and the environment that causes discomfort, not high technology.

"We haven't looked at the problem deeply enough. What's the root cause of these problems? I think it's management's attitude that is the source of these types of problems," Bodek stated. "I believe we've lost sight of our duties as managers. Our job is to make sure our people are getting all the support they need to get the job done." —KGB

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